

The HIGH COST of SOCIETY

It Takes Automobiles, Yachts, Jewels and Fine Houses, Where Social Leaders Can Be Entertained, if One Wishes to Keep Pace With Top-notchers.



The other day in one of the city newspapers there was a little story of three lines telling about a man killing himself because he had lost his position at a dollar and seventy-five cents a day, and no longer could support his family. On the same page at the top was a story of a wealthy widow of the grass variety asking the court to increase her alimony from \$2,000 a month to \$4,000 a month.

"I can't live on \$2,000 a month and maintain my social standing," the widow testified.

A reporter assigned to the case went out on his own authority to learn why one man could support himself and a family on \$1.75, while a woman without a family could not support herself on \$2,000 a month. The high cost of high society is the answer. When a woman belongs to a set she has to spend money to stay in that set. The same is true of a man. Back in the pioneer days a woman did not need anything more than some fingers nimble with the needle and thread in order to get into the best society of her community. She was admitted everywhere, provided she kept her clothing clean. The debutantes didn't even have shoes. The story is told of a debutante of the days before girls entering womanhood were known by that name, who started to a dance one evening with her best fellow. They were going to ride horseback and she objected when her mother made her wash her feet. But the days of barefoot society are gone.

The debutante of today must have a dog, an automobile and a coachman. She must be able to talk about several kinds of language teachers and play a piano player. She also must have a piano player and she must know how to talk interestingly about horse racing, yachting and a dozen other sports of the wealthy.

When Mrs. James Hope-Nelson was still Miss Valle she was pronounced the most beautiful girl in the world by the society folk at Newport. It took money to get that verdict and win the admiration of the wealthy young Englishman who finally married her. She needed money to break into Newport society and associate with the people who could call her the most beautiful.

When Miss Lois Campbell, daughter of James Campbell, had her coming out party the flowers alone would have been beyond the reach of the average man. Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont or Mrs. Frank Gould spend a lot of money in the entertaining of the friends. It is not much money for them, but it is an awful lot judged from ordinary standards. The second rate people attempt to equal them by spending like amounts, and that means a terrible effort for the second rates.

When the third and fourth rates come along they find themselves in still a worse predicament. It costs to go the pace and keep up with the high spending set by people of greater wealth.

MRS. JOHN P. LAFIN HAS \$20,000 SUITE.
Take Mrs. John P. Lavin as an example. She has a suite in New York which costs her \$50,000 a year. It contains thirty-seven rooms. She has to keep it. If she didn't, how could she expect to draw equally important society folks to her home? People like to go where they can have a good time. If they have million dollar

tastes these tastes must be satisfied if they are to be invited.

Mrs. Lavin sets an example of application, industry and helpfulness. She attends to every detail of her bookkeeping and disbursements. A considerable portion of her income is based on her personal study of finance and investment. She supervises her house-



hold and invents her entertainments. She devotes much time to work among the unemployed, the sick and the unhappy. When asked the inevitable question about suffrage, she denied the soft impeachment that she believed in the ballot for women. She declares she is a feminist, not a suffragist. "I am for women every time. I love women; I believe in women; I employ women whenever I possibly can. There is scarcely any line of work in which both sexes are employed that women are not more efficient than men. "I have a woman cook, a woman butler, women cleaners, house-



STRAUSS PORTRAIT



GERHARD SISTERS PHOTO

FROM left to right—Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, Mrs. Frank J. Gould, Miss Lois Campbell, Mrs. C. C. Cummings, Mrs. James Hope-Nelson.

workers and secretary. I would have a woman chauffeur if I did not dislike to expose a woman to the rain, the cold and the solitary waiting.

"I hope to give employment to five or six servants in my new

home that is causing so much excitement," laughed Mrs. Lavin.

"When we tear out partitions there will not be more than twenty-five or twenty-seven rooms. They will be large and comfortable and adapted for entertaining. Most apartments are cut up into foolish cubbyholes."

"I do not like to be called extravagant," she added. "No rule for living can be made to cover all alike. We must settle those questions personally and according to our own consciences."

GIRL ASKS ALLOWANCE OF \$15,000 ANNUALLY.

A girl of 18, Miss Kate Schermerhorn, applied the other day to Justice Weeks for an increase in her

allowance from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year.

"I got to have it," said Miss Schermerhorn. "I have my social position to maintain. I have to present myself to the right people at my age or I will miss the greatest opportunity for a girl at my age."

When Mrs. Lavin was asked about Miss Schermerhorn's necessity of spending so much a year she said:

"I can answer yes to that," she said. "The cost of social life is enormous. Much of this expenditure, however, is perfectly legitimate and necessary."

"In the case of Miss Schermerhorn, I do not wish to say a word of criticism. We have to decide our manner of living for ourselves. But I do think young people nowadays have set up standards that would horrify their great-grandmothers."

"In what I might call nonsociety circles, a man, wife and several children could live well on \$10,000 a year. But, if an establishment must be maintained, with servants, one or more motor cars, suitable wardrobe and liberal entertainments, \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year would go nowhere."

"One cannot hire a motor car for less than \$250 or \$300 a month, and one cannot move in social circles without the conveniences usual to persons in those circles."

"A girl's wardrobe without extravagance, can consume three or four thousand, while much must be added for wedding gifts, theater and opera tickets, flowers, souvenirs and incidentals."

"It is not the necessary things of life that trouble us. It is the luxuries imposed on us by custom. Of course, we do not have to follow custom. The error is in following it when you cannot afford to do so."

WISE MEN DISAGREE AS TO THEORIES OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

A controversy is going on among the wise men as to the existence of hell. Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard, started the controversy by denying the existence of such a place.

Now an answer has been made to Dr. Eliot by Prof. L. T. Townsend of Massachusetts, one of the foremost Bible students in the country. The reply of Professor Townsend appears in the Bible Champion, a publication founded for the purpose of spreading belief in the Bible.

The statement of Dr. Eliot, which started the controversy, follows: "In the present day no educated person believes in hell. This declaration will no doubt be publicly disapproved by some rather archaic ministers and also by some editors of religious papers."

"A new religion, Twentieth Century religion, is bound to come. Whether it will prove as efficient to deter men from doing wrong and encourage them to do right as the prevailing religions have been is a question which experience alone can answer. In these two respects neither the threats nor the promises of the older religion have been remarkably successful in society at large."

"The fear of a hell has not proved effective to deter men from wrong doing, and heaven has never yet been described in terms very

attractive to the average man or woman. Both are indeed unimaginable. The great geniuses, like Dante and Swedenborg, have produced only fantastic and incredible pictures of either state. "The modern man would hardly feel any appreciable loss of motive power toward good or away from evil if heaven were burned and hell quenched."

The prevailing Christian conceptions of heaven and hell have hardly any more influence with thinking people in the present day than have Olympus and Hades. The modern mind craves an immediate motive of leading, good for today, on this earth."

"The new religion will build on the actual experiences of men and women of human society as a whole. The motive power it relies on has been and is at work in innumerable human lives, and its beatific visions and its hopes are better grounded than are those of traditional religion and finer because free from all selfishness and from the imagery of governments, courts, social distinctions and wars."

"Among the masses of Protestants some belief in the infallibility of the Bible still survives, but the opening century will doubtless see the gradual surrender of this transitional belief throughout the Protestant world. The Nineteenth Century has seen

the foundation of the structure of the Christian system of theology undermined; the Twentieth Century will see it given over to the bats and to the owls."

Replying to this, Professor Townsend says:

"When any man says 'I do not believe in hell,' one cannot not feel that an unsound attitude has been taken and that whatever evidence may be presented to him is likely to be thrown out of the window."

"A challenge is sometimes put in this form: 'Do not ask me to believe in hell unless you can tell me where it is.'"

"This it is impossible to do. No man living knows further than this, that it seems to be in a direction downward, which, however, may not signify a geographical direction."

"But because one cannot tell is no proof that there is not such a place. No one can tell where heaven is, though we point upward. This lack of knowledge, however, does not settle the question whether or not there is a heaven. No one knows where in this planetary system our earth is, whether near or far from the center of the universe, or in what direction, up or down. It is moving, or what are the bounds of space, but all the same the earth has a place and is mov-

ing, nor does our ignorance settle the question of the limit of space."

Doctor Eliot some time ago visited countries in the Far East. He doubtless has crossed to Europe several times, but how little he has traveled compared with what he has not! He has not walked along the star decked Milky Way, he has not visited the Dipper nor the Southern Cross, nor Jupiter, nor Mars, the moon, the North Pole nor the South Pole, nor has he yet taken the death journey."

"Doctor Eliot is still in the land of the living. The invisible, spiritual realms, the gates of heaven and God's throne are far beyond his ken. He has not diligently searched for nor devoutly heeded the evidence concerning the place said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, called Gehenna in the New Testament and translated 'hell.' Nor has he gone as far as Judas or Shael, the intermediate world, where the dead remain until after the judgment. How, therefore, can any one allow any man who has traveled so little decide what is or is not in those realms that are far beyond visitation?"

"The trouble with Doctor Eliot and with others of his way of thinking seems to be that they admit of no provision or qualification in their theological unbeliefs. There is no hell in their theology."

no atonement; the Bible is an antiquated book and Christ is only another human being."

"One is sometimes led to wonder whether such a man as Doctor Eliot, learned as he is said to be, has ever seriously taken into account the fact that there are two sides to some theological questions or whether he has ever considered thoughtfully what it means that men of the highest standing in scholarship and mental grasp have firmly believed what he does not believe." Are the opinions of these orthodox men, simply because they are orthodox, to have no weight in the settlement of these profoundest of problems?

"If the rankings of the late Robert G. Ingersoll and the more dignified announcements of Dr. Eliot express actual conditions or a general conviction then the ethical motive for holding and advocating the Bible doctrine of either heaven or hell would be so largely diminished that pulpits silence on the subject may as well remain unbroken. But on the other hand the opinions of many experienced and wise men is that the thought of future reward is still an incentive to the ordinary man and woman and that the deep rooted expectation of a merited punishment after death, as in all ages and countries, acts as a wholesome and restraining check upon humanity."